

AL DAAWAH



No for
TERRORISM



The Riyadh Bombings An Unhurried Reading

The astoundingly horrible terrorist attacks that took place in Riyadh last month by a clique of killers and that resulted in tens of victims need to be carefully read with a view to exploring some of the facts that will help the reader understand the phenomenon of terrorism and how to deal with it.

The first thing that draws the attention in such hideous terrorist acts is that the perpetrators have belittled all noble Islamic morals, rather all human feelings.

An insight into the incident will clearly show that these terrorists have gone through a serious intellectual transformation. It is the first time in the series of their abominable crimes that they targeted housing compounds. In spite of the fact that they were certain there would be victims among Muslim children, women and old men, such an idea had not turned a hair in their bodies nor they hesitated about assassinating innocent children and lives which Allah prohibited to kill.

Thus, all plots have been exposed and the ugly faces that are thirsty for blood and devoid of all moral values and humane principles have been uncovered.

Targeting Saudi Arabia and the security of Saudi nationals which resulted in the killing and injuring of several Saudis and expatriates stresses the fact that we have always been telling to our friends in the West; namely that these terrorists, even though they hold the Saudi nationality, do not represent Saudi Arabia or the Saudi people. They are now targeting their country and brothers mercilessly. This clearly indicates that terrorists, even if they are Saudis, represent nothing but their depraved and misguided ideologies. Therefore, it is no longer acceptable to accuse Saudi Arabia and Saudi people of breeding or supporting terrorism. Had they been doing so, they would not have been scorched with the fire of terrorism.

The stance that the Saudi society, institutions and personalities have taken towards such hideous incidents has been outstanding. It reflects how they have always been steadfast and loyal to the Islamic teachings in words and deeds.

The political leadership has taken the initiative to hunt down the criminals as well as to establish the necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such acts in the future.

Various religious institutions have also shouldered their duties in educating members of society in the dangers of terrorism. Many statements, rulings (fatawa), speeches and lectures have been given to this effect. It has been highlighted that violent acts are prohibited in Islam because they entail serious damage to the image of Arab and Muslim societies. Muslims have also been called to kindly deal with and respect the rights of non-Muslims.

All citizens throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed sympathy with the victims and showed readiness to cooperate with security authorities to arrest the terrorists and hunt them down everywhere.

In this special issue, we have collected some press articles which sincerely convey the stance that Saudi leaders, scholars and officials maintain towards the phenomenon of new international terrorism.

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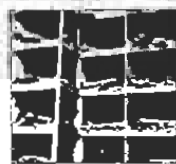
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The Journey to
Islam

Islam and Dialogue

Dr. Ahmad A. Al-Benayyan*

Creating an opportunity for dialogue between Muslims, on the one hand, and between Muslims and the followers of others religions and advocates of different ideologies, on the other, has presently become a necessity, rather a priority in the face of the many internal and external challenges. Today, dialogue constitutes an important tool that different states and cultures should adopt within what is termed as a 'New World Order', by building on the language of dialogue rather than the language of war and destruction. In fact, constructive dialogue has become necessary more than ever before, especially at a time when the world is armed to its teeth with nuclear and other mass destruction weapons and is becoming more inclined to embrace the notorious theme of the clash of civilizations propagated by Huntington.

Allah has blessed us with the Message of Islam, which forbids anything that brings harm to us and enjoins on us everything that brings good to us. Islam has taught us that we should adopt the principle of dialogue, instill it in our minds and hearts, bring up our children and educate them in such a principle so that amity and fraternity may prevail among people and so that tyranny would be eliminated from our life.

Islam has regulated the relationship of man with his Lord as far as faith and worship are concerned, the relationship of man with oneself as far as striving to be as close to righteousness as possible and the relationship of individuals and groups, Muslims or non-Muslims, with one another in all political, economic, social and other fields. It urges human beings to think logically and rationally and to avoid biased views and blind imitation. The message of Islam has addressed the mind of man because it is the centre of control and decision-making as expressed in the verse "Do they not travel in the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts which are in their breasts." [22:46]

The Holy Qur'an teaches us great lessons about dialogue. One of the prominent lessons of dialogue laid down in the Qur'an is the one that runs between Allah the Al-Mighty and the angels. We read in the Holy Qur'an: "Behold, your Lord said to the angels; 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?' - while we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?" He said: 'I know what you know not.' And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: 'Tell Me the names of these if you are right.' They said: 'Glory to You: of knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom.' He said: 'O Adam! Tell them their names.' When he had told them their names, Allah said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and know what you reveal and what you conceal?' [2:30-33]

Dialogue is best manifest in the principle of shura (consultation) which is one of the most important principles of Islam. Allah commends true believers "who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation." [42:38] Allah also says about this principle "So pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment)." [3:159] Hence, setting down the principle of Shura would maintain the dignity of human beings. The Messenger of Guidance (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was always consulting his companions in many matters as, for example, was the case before the Battle of Badr about the right location to deploy the Muslim army. Allah the Almighty is capable of showing the Prophet the right location by way of revelation. However, He left the matter to be decided on by Muslims through dialogue and consultation.

As is has thus been made clear, Islam has firmly established and regulated the principle of dialogue. Therefore, for dialogue to yield fruits, it should meet certain conditions, paramount among them is that the parties engaged in dialogue should wisely and nicely converse with each other, away from any kind of humiliation or insult. Allah says, "And argue with them in the best (way)." The objective of inter-Islamic dialogue is to bring hearts and minds closer to each other rather than to win competitions by way of shouting. Respect of and gentle interaction with the opposite party is a necessity for those who engage in dialogue, as reflected in the verse "Had you been severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you." [3:159] Another important requirement of dialogue is that the parties engaged in dialogue should have an in-depth knowledge of the subject of dialogue so that ill-founded judgments would not prevail. Allah says, "Yet there is among men such a one as disputes about Allah, without knowledge, without guidance, and without a Book of Enlightenment, (disdainfully) bending his side, in order to lead (men) astray from the Path of Allah: for him there is disgrace in this life, and on the Day of Judgment We shall make him taste the chastisement of burning (Fire). (It will be said): 'This is because of the deeds which your hands sent forth, for verily Allah is not unjust to His servants.'" [22:8-10] He also says, "And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for surely the hearing, the sight, the heart; all of those shall be questioned of." [17:36] Yet another condition for a successful dialogue is good faith between the parties of dialogue. Assuming bad faith would unequivocally lead to conflict since hypotheses of covert conspiracies will soon rise. To make dialogue useful and fair, each party should be given the opportunity to express their views without interruption. Sound dialogue needs good listening as much as it needs good discussion.

In conclusion, dialogue is not new to us for it is one of the principles that our religion has taught us to adopt. So, let us have dialogue but in full compliance with the teachings of our religion.

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